



For Immediate Release

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**THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION HONORS 13 DALLAS EDUCATORS
WITH WORK OF HEART AWARDS**

***The Catholic Foundation Board of Trustees announces continued support and funding for
Work of Heart Award program through Spring 2010***

DALLAS – The Catholic Foundation recently announced the latest round of Work of Heart award recipients. Thirteen Dallas-area Catholic school teachers and staff members were recognized for their dedication to teaching and service to the Catholic community. Each recipient received a \$500 grant for personal use.

“The Catholic Foundation is pleased to give these individuals the recognition they so deserve for the guidance, support and encouragement they provide our children,” said Edwin M. Schaffler, president of The Catholic Foundation. “The Work of Heart award is only a small token of our appreciation. These teachers and staff members embody the idea of leading by example and serve as incredible role models and mentors to their students, coworkers and the Catholic community.”

The Work of Heart Award program was established in 2005 by an anonymous Dallas family through The Catholic Foundation to honor educators and staff of Catholic lower, middle and high schools located in the Dallas area, and is now supported by grants awarded from The Catholic Foundation Board of Trustees to the Work of Heart Award Fund at The Catholic Foundation. Recently, the Board of Trustees approved another round of funding to continue the Work of Heart Award program throughout Spring 2010. Individuals can make personal contributions to the Work of Heart Award Fund at the Foundation to further support the program.

"The Work of the Heart awards have been a very welcome recognition for our staff. Seeing the delighted and surprised smiles on the recipients' faces and hearing the loud applause and affirmation from our community warms our hearts and gives us impetus to continue this labor of love," said Elena C. Hines, principal of St. Rita Catholic School. "It seems that the award always comes to just the right person at a time when they need it most. We are so grateful to The Catholic Foundation for their continued work of the heart."

Recipients of the Work of Heart Awards were selected from nominations written by students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members. The Foundation has formed a committee, with members of its Advisory Council, to read the nomination letters received each month and decide which teachers and staff members

will receive a Work of Heart Award. The criteria is based on traditional merit including tenure and leadership, acts of kindness or charity, Christian example, mentoring and simply going the extra mile for an individual student, family or the community.

The following recipients each received a \$500 Work of Heart Award in recognition of their outstanding service. Each is listed with a comment from the nomination letter submitted on his or her behalf.

Bishop Dunne Catholic School

- Hill Copeland, On-Line Learning Instructor

"Because of the unique setting of his classes, Hill is at work all hours of the day and night. If a student needs help before school, Hill is at his computer ready to help. If a student needs feedback late at night, Hill is ready to help them as well."

Bishop Lynch High School

- Terry May, Student Activities Director

"When asked to do something, Terry May never says 'I don't think I can do that' or 'Well, that would be too difficult.' If you ask her to do something she always says, 'Yes I can do that.'"

Immaculate Conception Catholic School

- Diana Davis, Spanish Teacher

"Diana Davis, our Mary Poppins, walked in and had no problem making Spanish interesting and fun to the students! In addition to her creative teaching, she actively gets them involved in their community and environment. Diana Davis has gone the extra mile in teaching students to be good stewards of our Lord's creation."

- JoLynn Cekosky, Third Grade Teacher

"Mrs. Cekosky shows a unique way of reaching out to her students. Her class walks in with a fear of the unknown and exits with a bond of love and readiness for the year ahead in fourth grade. Most importantly she touches their lives in a beautiful way filled with love and compassion."

John Paul II High School

- Katie Hensle, History Teacher & Basketball Coach

"I am impressed by Coach Hensle's attitude towards not only developing the basketball players as good teammates, but also as good people."

Mary Immaculate Catholic School

- Ramon Vargas, Maintenance Manager

"Ramon always has a bright smile, enthusiastic demeanor and tremendous energy for his work. No matter what the situation, if he sees a school volunteer lifting something or moving something, he offers his help. His gentle people skills has charmed all ages, for I have never heard a negative comment made by him nor about him."

Mount St. Michael Catholic School

- Martha Mendez, Administrative Staff

"Martha Mendez wears many, many hats. She prays with students when they come into the clinic. She knows every child's name. She has given her lunch to a student who forgot theirs. She can figure out the copy machine, attend to the students in the cafeteria, give first aid, be a mentor to the girls' club, and I am not sure of what she doesn't do!"

Notre Dame School

- Dorris Burns, Teacher

"Teaching special needs students can be trying and rewarding. Dorris rarely complains, but gives patience and support with gentle understanding and compassion of their individual disabilities. It's that special dedication of heart and soul which helps build our students' self esteem with no limits, only possibilities. The students respond easily and well to her. Dorris' persistent patience confirms that positive discipline redeems all things to God."

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School

- Jeff Guidry, Teacher

“Mr. Guidry has proven to be an excellent teacher and wonderful asset to the school. Along with fulfilling his role as a teacher, he has taken on numerous projects over the years aimed at empowering and enriching the students in areas such as fine arts, science and athletics. I have seen firsthand his outgoing personality, his caring and his devotion to his students. He is a great Christian example and mentor.”

- Sandra Infante, Cafeteria Staff

“Sandra Infante always helps bring a positive attitude to the children. I am extremely honored to know this individual who gave of herself to help the whole school. It is my wish that she be awarded for her heart and hard work.”

St. Joseph Catholic School - Richardson

- Terri LeBlanc, Religion Teacher

“It is evident that Terri LeBlanc is a natural religion teacher. She has very quickly established a rapport with the children and has created a very unique and dynamic atmosphere in her classroom. She not only teaches religion, but also seeks to help develop a participative relationship with the Mass, asking the students to reflect each week on the homily at the school mass.”

St. Joseph Catholic School - Waxahachie

- Maribeth May, Development Director

“Maribeth May has been a vital part of St. Joseph’s growth. She totally believes in the school’s success. We would certainly be ‘up a creek’ without all the extra miles she gives to the school to which she is dedicated.”

St. Rita Catholic School

- Vincent Rugambamazima, School Custodian

“Vincent Rugambamazima is the absolute best janitor anyone could ask for! He is a kind, humble and confident man. In addition to working every day of the week, he comes to St. Rita every Sunday night to unlock the door for the weekly Boy Scout meeting. Vincent is always smiling and really shows he cares about St. Rita and everyone in it – children and adults.”

To nominate a candidate for the Work of Heart Award, please visit the Foundation’s Web site at **www.catholicfoundation.com** for instructions on the nomination process. Anyone serving as a full- or part-time employee in a Catholic school located in the Diocese of Dallas may be nominated.

Chartered in 1955 by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen, The Catholic Foundation is a donor-focused community foundation that guides benefactors in compassionate charitable giving endeavors, utilizing extensive expertise to carry out the various philanthropic goals of its donors. The Foundation’s planned giving programs connects donors directly with organizations they wish to support within the Diocese of Dallas and elsewhere, whether that is a home parish, Catholic school or a community-based charity. Thanks to the generosity of donors both past and present, The Foundation has provided approximately \$22 million to local organizations through hundreds of grants over the past 53 years, and donor-advised funds maintained at the Foundation have accounted for even more grants amounting to millions of dollars. For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972.661.9792.

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